



Panel

8.6. Cadastral sources from Scandinavia as gateway to Rural History

Panel organiser: Dam, Peder, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Denmark, Norway and Sweden including attached countries such as Finland, the Baltic countries, Pomerania and Schleswig-Holstein have rich collections of nationwide cadastral sources. Unique cadastres (matriklar, jordeböcker and similar) and large-scale maps were created by strong and centralized administrations in the 16th and 17th century, primary for taxation purposes and for managing the large royal estates. They provide a unique insight and valuation of the pre modern agrarian landscape and society. Thousands of individual settlements, and even single strips of land, can be analyzed and compared. These Scandinavian sources are perhaps the most fruitful historical sources of its kind. Still, many questions are unanswered and several possible historical analyses have never been done because of the size and complexity of the sources. The aim of this panel is to discuss the background and origin of various cadastral and similar sources of 16th and 17th century, as well as the challenges and potential in using the sources in historical analysis. The following topics are raised: a) Political and historical background of the sources, b) The characteristics of the sources and c) Challenges and potential in historical analysis and examples of such analysis.

Chair: Rasmussen, Carsten Porskrog, Aarhus University, Denmark

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Paper

8.6.1. The total registration of farms in Sweden 1530–1630

Karsvall, Olof, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

In the 1530s a central register was created in Sweden, the Crown's cadastres (Kronans kordeböcker) following the leadership of King Gustav I. This work was further refined during the 1540s under the direction of German assistants, with detailed specifications of the annual land-taxes applied to individual farms, registered by category of land ownership. Surprisingly, despite the Reformation (introduced 1527) the late medieval distinction between tenants belonging to the church and monasteries remained. Therefore the cadastres also enable further retrogressive studies of the late medieval condition. Generally, Sweden appears to have been sparsely

populated and inhabited, with few towns and few large farms (demesne). Instead single farms or smaller hamlet of 2-4 farms reappear. The Crown only constituted 5 % of the land by early 1600s. A high proportion of farms (45 %) were freeholders, which separate Sweden from other countries in Europe at the time, although tenants were in majority in the central and southern provinces. By 1560 basically all farms across the country had been registered, estimated to 65 000–70 000 farms or holdings (Heckscher 1935, Larsson 1985). Fortunately, most of the cadastres are preserved today. The first series 1530–1630 comprises 7 000 cadastres (Finland not included): in total, hundreds of thousands of data on farms. Since last year the entire collection is digitally available through the Swedish National Archives (National archives, Kammarkarkivet, Landskapshandlingar).

8.6.2. Old Swedish geometrical maps

Tollin, Clas, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

Sweden has a unique collection of large scale maps from the 1630es on. These maps show in detail the agrarian landscape at the time including the building tofts, the land use distribution in arable land, hay meadows, paddocks and so on. Even line elements like fences, roads and boundaries are registried. Together with the map there is a text description (Notarum Explicatio) consisting of cameral and economic data. There are for instance figures over the size of arable land and harvest of hay for each farm. Besides there notations of the quality of the soil, type of grassland, hop gardens, water mills, fishing sites and other items. No other country in the world has a nearly as comprehensive, coherent and systematic large scale mapping from 1600's first half. In total there are maps from more than 12,000 hamlets, villages and single farms in Sweden, before the Treaty of Brömsebro 1645. Since 2010 all maps and transcribed texts are available as open access on the Web. There is also a connected data base called GEORG with statistics, quantitative and qualitative data also available as open access. www.riksarkivet.se/georg

8.6.3. Danish land registers

Dam, Peder, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

After yet another lost war (1657-1660) against the contemporary superpower, Sweden, the need for a new danish taxation system of the agrarian population arose. In the 1660s information of each farms land rent, e.g. type and amount of natural goods paid by the tenants to their landlords, was collected and from this the taxes were then subsequently fixed. Twenty years later in the 1680s a new taxation was carried out: every strip of cultivated land was measured and valued, and furthermore a rougher estimation of the non-cultivated areas such as grasslands, forests, heaths and moors were carried out. Finally, all values and estimates were calculated, converted and summarized for each farm, resulting in the total valuation in one uniform unit. These two land registers are huge, even for a European standards, and furthermore they were carried out systematic for each farm in the Kingdom of Denmark. They can provide us with a unique and detailed picture of the physical landscape, of the land ownership and of the settlement structure before the agrarian reforms dramatically changed it all. Both registers have been subject to digitization and mapping in GIS the last decade.

8.6.4. Finding agrarian capitalism in Norway c. 1500–1800

Dorum, Knut, University of Agder, Norway

The point of departure of this article is the research on agrarian capitalism in Norway in c. 1500–1800 based on cadastres and deeds. It has been a widespread opinion that the Norwegian farming prior to 1800 had no commercial potential. A common suggestion is that the climate conditions, the scattered population and the scarcity of arable land constituted major obstacles to any development of livestock and cereal production for sale, markets and consumers. There were no or at least extremely weak foundations for any capitalistic element in the peasants' farming, neither in the landed estates owned by burghers and state officials nor in the demesne land held by the nobility. The nobility had reached the edge of extinction, while the burghers and the state officials only succeeded to a minor extent in acquiring large and coherent landed estates and even less geographically concentrated estates. Their landed estates were scattered around over a wide area, and the higher estates were seldom interested in commercial use of their landed properties. Furthermore, the social distribution of land properties also left little room for large-scale production. In the 17th century the numerous peasants owned 40 per cent of the landed estates, and their share increased to two-thirds around 1820. This paper seeks to examine to which degree the mentioned description fits into the historical reality of Norway c. 1500-1800.

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